DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 232 204 CS 207 759

AUTHOR Shoemaker, Pamela J.
TITLE Uni- Versus Multidimensional Comparison of Political Groups.
PUB DATE May 83
NOTE 41p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Communication Association (Dallas, TX, May 26-30, 1983).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Attitudes; Comparative Analysis; Measurement Techniques; Media Research; *News Media; *News Reporting; *Political Affiliation; *Political Attitudes; Politics; *Predictive Validity
IDENTIFIERS Conservatism; Editors; Liberalism

ABSTRACT

Journalists view the left-right continuum as a dimension on which political entities array themselves in order to vie for a similarly arrayed public. Such a spatial measuring device is useful, since it allows journalists to compare political entities on a common scale that readers supposedly understand and on which they can relate their own political positions. However, the use of this unidimensional scale has come under attack by researchers who argue that to better serve their readers journalists need to use a multidimensional approach in identifying political groups and actors. To test the hypothesis that the unidimensional scale is as good a predictor of a journalist's characterization of a group as a legitimate political contender as is a multidimensional approach, news and political editors from 57 of the largest daily newspapers in the United States were asked to place 11 groups on four scales: the traditional unidimensional scale, and three scales measuring similarity of the groups to most Americans, amount of change advocated by the groups, and how the editor felt about the groups. The results supported the hypothesis, suggesting that journalists think in ideological terms and regularly array political entities on the left-right scale. If, as the critics of this scale suggest, the general audience is composed of less politically knowledgeable people, then the ideological information provided in news reports may not provide adequate information for the average reader to evaluate a political group. (FL)

UNI- VERSUS MULTIDIMENSIONAL COMPARISON OF POLITICAL GROUPS

Pamela J. Shoemaker
Assistant Professor

University of Texas
Department of Journalism
Austin TX 78712
512-471-7708

ABSTRACT

UNI- VERSUS MULTIDIMENSIONAL COMPARISON OF POLITICAL GROUPS

Critics of the traditional left-right, liberal-conservative scale frequently used to compare political entities have suggested the need for additional dimensions of comparison. This study investigated the hypothesis that the left-right scale would be as good a predictor of the dependent variable for politically sophisticated and knowledgeable subjects as a multidimensional approach would be. The hypothesis was supported for a sample of newspaper editors, suggesting that journalists readily think in ideological terms and regularly array political groups on the left-right scale. If, as the critics of the left-right scale suggest, the general audience is composed of less politically knowledgeable people, then the ideological information provided in news reports may not provide adequate information for the average reader to evaluate a political group.

The popular left-right, liberal-conservative scale frequently used to compare political entities has come under attack in recent years. Many researchers (such as Kornberg, Mishler, and Smith, 1975; Coveyon and Piereson, 1977; Stokes, 1963; Weisberg and Rusk, 1970; Brown and Taylor, 1973; and Levitin and Miller, 1973) have challenged the Hotelling-Downs model of locating political entities only along a one-dimensional space (Downs, 1957; Hotelling, 1929), generally taken to be the left-right continuum.

The left-right continuum, whose origins go back to the French revolution, is viewed as a dimension on which political groups and actors array themselves in order to vie for a similarly arrayed public (Stokes, 1963). Such a spatial measuring device is useful to journalists, since it allows them to compare political actors on a common scale which readers supposedly understand and on which they can relate their own political positions.

Gans (1979) suggests that journalists array political entities on a seven-point ideological spectrum: left-wing radicals, left-leaning liberals, liberals,

moderates, conservatives, ultra-conservatives, and right-wing extremists. The Democratic and Republican parties are generally viewed as centrist groups (i.e., close to the "moderate" position on Gans's scale), while various "third" parties usually find their support further away from the political center, both to the left and to the right of the centrist groups.

Although the root of this unidimensional scaling concept goes back to Harold Hotelling (1929), Downs (1957) refined the model, no longer assuming that the public is evenly distributed over a unidimensional space, but rather that the public distribution over the space is an important variable. Downs's original example of the left-right dimension was in economic terms: The dimension represented the degree of government intervention in the economy, with the extreme left representing complete government control and the extreme right representing no government intervention beyond the most limited operations. As Stokes (1963) interprets Downs's conception, each political party can be located on the dimension according to how much government control it advocates, while voters can be located on the scale according to how much government control they want. A political party's ultimate position on the scale is actually the average of the positions it takes on a variety of individual issues.

Other dimensions

Stokes and other critics of the Hotelling-Downs unidimensional model contend that the public actually uses more than one dimension on which to array political entities, especially the various third political parties and special interest groups which may depend less on where they lie on the left-right dimension than on other dimensions of political conflict (Stokes, 1963). But, while recent political commentators agree that people probably use more than one dimension when comparing political entities, the commentators cannot agree on what the multiple dimensions might be and on how the traditional liberal-conservative dimension relates to them.

Weisberg and Rusk (1970) concluded that two dimensions contribute to candidate evaluation: a left-right dimension and a party identification or government power dimension. They studied data collected by the University of Michigan's Survey Research Center on the 1968 election, where the "feeling thermometer" was used to allow respondents to evaluate political candidates on dimensions of their own making, without a frame of reference imposed by the researcher. They concluded that there was a single ideological dimension ranging from Humphrey at one end to Wallace at the other end, with Nixon in the middle. A second dimension, however, allowed even a better fit to the data. Weisberg and Rusk labeled it a political party identification dimension which also included attitudes on social welfare policy

or government power more generally.

Kornberg, Mishler, and Smith (1975) found three useful dimensions in their study of Canadian politics: left-right, major party-minor party, and government party-opposition party. Their interpretation of the left-right scale involves the power of the federal government, whether in Canada or the United States: "A left position advocates that greater use be made of the powers and resources of the national government to establish a more egalitarian society by providing social services; a rightist position advocates the opposite." The two other dimensions--major party versus minor party and government party versus opposition party--were derived through factor analysis. Kornberg, Mishler, and Smith concluded that, although a left-right dimension did underlie people's perceptions of Canadian political parties, the extent to which people relied on that scale for defining and comparing political entities depended on the individual's personal qualities like knowledge and political sophistication. They suggest that indicators of political sophistication may be socio-economic status, age, sex, and place of residence.

In most cases the dimensions suggested to supplement the left-right ideological scale involve specific policies which are bound to the specific time, place, and political entities studied. While there is general agreement that the traditional left-right, liberal-conservative dimension

is inadequate for use as a universal and sufficient measure of political concepts, no one has yet found either a unidimensional replacement or a second or third universal dimension which could supplement the left-right scale and which would be generalizable enough for use in research projects at different times, in different locales, and on different political entities.

Finding two or three universal dimensions may be impossible (Stokes, 1963). Perhaps we will find that political dimensions will always be peculiar to the structural variables defining the political situation. The economy, the country, the time, the type of political entity, and a myriad of other variables could affect the salience of various alternate dimensions.

Reese and Miller (1981) suggest that the extent to which people use the left-right ideological scale "to impose order on the political world" may vary among individuals. Kornberg, Mishler, and Smith (1975) and Stokes (1963) have pointed out that, the more politically sophisticated and knowledgeable an individual is, the more likely he is to array political concepts along the left-right scale. They imply that the less politically sophisticated individual may find the left-right scale inadequate or even irrelevant for his use in comparing political entities.

This suggests an interesting problem for communication researchers: The journalists who transmit information about political groups and actors may mentally array those entities along the left-right scale to a greater

extent than the general audience does. The political reporter, who is typically college-educated and familiar with the daily workings of the political system, may present political concepts to his readers in ideological terms that are irrelevant to some readers' experiences or that convey inadequate comparative information to the reader. To the extent that ideology provides the individual with a framework for processing political information (Reese and Miller, 1981), individuals who have less political knowledge than the political reporter may find themselves exposed to a confusing stream of ideological information, very little of which is meaningful to them.

Communication researchers may find that, while a unidimensional, ideological approach may be sufficient to compare journalists' attitudes toward political entities (either through survey research of journalists or through content analysis of the media), other dimensions in addition to the ideological dimension may be essential when asking the audience to compare the same entities. If researchers use the economical unidimensional approach to measure journalists' attitudes toward political entities, such measurements may be difficult to compare with a multi-dimensional measurement of the general audience's attitudes toward the political entities.

Hypothesis

This study investigates the extent to which the unidimensional approach is a sufficient measure of the way in which journalists compare political entities. The hypothesis under consideration in this methodological study is that, for the politically knowledgeable journalist subjects, the left-right continuum is as good a predictor (in terms of variance explained) of the dependent variable (media content) as would be a multidimensional measure (the left-right dimension plus one or more other dimensions).

METHOD

The hypothesis was tested via secondary analysis of data collected to test a critical theory of the media as agents of social control. The data were originally collected to study the relationship between journalists' perceptions of the deviance of various political groups and media portrayal of the groups as legitimate political contenders.

The dependent variable was characterization of the political group as a legitimate political contender, as shown through a content analysis.[1] The independent variable was the comparison of the political groups by news and political editors on the left-right ideological continuum and on three other scales. The unit of analysis was the political group. Eleven political groups were selected for study: the League of

Women Voters, Sierra Club, Common Cause, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, National Organization for Women, National Rifle Association, Moral Majority, Jewish Defense League, Communist Party, Ku Klux Klan, and the Nazis.

Comparison of the political groups

News and political editors from the 100 largest U.S. daily newspapers (as rated by Editor and Publisher Yearbook 1981) were asked to place the groups on four scales.

The survey was sent to the political editor if the newspaper had one, otherwise to the news editor. These large daily newspapers were selected because their editors were more likely to have direct experience with the political groups being studied and were also more likely to have news holes big enough to have actually carried articles about the groups. Political editors and news editors were selected also because of their supposed exposure to and experience with covering political groups.

The first scale was the traditional ideological political spectrum, with these values: left-wing radical, very liberal, liberal, moderate, conservative, very conservative, and right-wing radical. For the analysis, the scale was "folded," so that it became a four-point ideological scale ranging from centrist (the moderate position) to very deviant (the left- or

right-wing radical positions). This recoding yielded a scale which measured the distance of the group from the center of the political spectrum by removing differences due to the side of the political spectrum on which the group lies and making it more comparable to the other four-point scales.

The structural variables present in this study suggested that three scales might also provide useful comparisons:

(1) Similarity to most Americans. The survey question used was: "Some groups and individuals hold views which are a lot like the views held by the majority of Americans, while others hold very different views. Circle the category which you think best describes how close these groups are to the way most Americans think." Possible responses included: very similar to most Americans, somewhat similar to most Americans, somewhat dissimilar to most Americans, and very dissimilar to most Americans.

(2) Amount of change advocated. The survey asked the following: "Some groups and individuals like traditional values and want things to remain much the same as they are now, while others would like to see

changes made. Circle the category which best describes your impression of how much change these groups are advocating." Possible responses included: happy with things the way they are now, some changes should take place, quite a few changes are needed, and extreme changes are needed.

(3) How close the editor felt to the group. The question was: "Circle the category which reflects how close you feel to the ideas and actions of each of these groups." Possible responses included: very close, quite close, somewhat close, and not at all close.

These dimensions have the advantage of being broad; using specific issue dimensions didn't seem appropriate considering the wide variety of groups the editors were asked to compare. While it may be possible to meaningfully rate the Sierra Club on an environmental issue, such a rating for the Ku Klux Klan is probably meaningless.

Reliability (standardized item alpha) of the independent variable measures is shown in Tables 1 to 4. The editors surveyed are a fairly homogeneous group, as is evident from Table 5. They are on the whole experienced journalists, having worked as journalists for an average of nearly 23 years. While they talk about politics a lot with family, friends, and coworkers and they do express a lot of interest in politics, they are generally not active in politics and claim that their political attitudes have little or no effect on their work.

Measurement of characterization

Two of the newspapers included in the study had ceased publication by February 1982. Of the remaining 98 editors, 57 returned the questionnaire in time to be included in the analysis, a 60 percent return.

Media characterization of the group as a legitimate political contender was measured by a content analysis. A 12-month time frame was selected for the analysis. For various reasons having mainly to do with access to indexes and microfilms, the analysis was performed for the July 1, 1980, to June 30, 1981, time period for seven newspapers--the Atlanta Constitution, Chicago Tribune, Christian Science Monitor, Los Angeles Times, New York Times, San Francisco Chronicle, and the Washington Post.

A New York Times Info Bank computer search of the 11 political groups in the 7 newspapers yielded a list of 538 news and feature articles dealing with each group in the 12-month period. (Editorials, commentary, letters to the editor, and advertisements were not included.) Since some articles mentioned more than one of the 11 political groups, the sampling frame became a total of 604 articles (counting each time one of the 11 groups was mentioned in an article as one article).[2]

A random sample of articles dealing with each group was drawn from the computer list. At least 10 articles were sampled from each group, and at least 20 percent of the articles were included in the sample. The purpose was to ensure both that there was a sufficient number of articles about a group to be reliably analyzed and that the sample was large enough to be representative of the population of articles. This plan yielded a sample of 152 articles.

Article character was based on the four legitimacy dimensions--evaluation, legality, viability, and stability--which had previously been found through factor analysis of experimental data.[3] The measurement scheme was adapted from Osgood's (1959) description of evaluation assertion analysis. In "legitimacy assertion analysis," the articles were translated into a series of evaluation words and phrases, legality assertions, viability assertions, and stability assertions. A two-letter code was assigned to each group name and substituted in the phrases and assertions so that two of the three coders would have no knowledge of the group's true identity, consistent with Osgood's method. (One of the coders was the person who assigned the two-letter codes.)[4]

Evaluation words and phrases are those which reveal the writer's attitude toward the group. Evaluations include attitudes toward the group as evidenced in these indicators: (1) the degree to which the writer likes the group, (2) the degree to which the writer agrees with the group's goals; (3) the writer's confidence that the entity will do the right thing; and (4) the perceived value of the group to society.

Legality assertions reveal the kinds of activities the writer selects to include in his article about a group and a sense of whether the group is seen as having a right to participate in political activities and outcomes. Activities of political groups may be seen as either supporting the status quo or as opposing the status quo. These indicators are included in legality: (1) whether the group is shown as obeying or as breaking U.S. laws; (2) whether the group participates in normative or nonnormative activities; (3) whether the group is shown as respecting or disrespecting the U.S. political system; and (5) whether the group is shown as having a right to assume power within the political system.

Viability assertions are those which indicate the extent to which a group is represented as being able to achieve its goals. Indicators of viability include: (1) the extent and availability of the group's financial resources; (2) the extent of its political and communication skills; (3) the extent to which the group

is organized and efficient; and (4) the extent to which it can get help from political allies outside of its membership.

Stability assertions indicate the extent to which a group is represented as being consistent and enduring. Indicators include: (1) the length of time the group has already existed; (2) the probability of its existence in the future; (3) the consistency of its policies over time; and (4) the extent to which its goals are all related as part of an overall program.

The assertions (or words and phrases, in the case of evaluation) for each legitimacy dimension were averaged within each article, yielding an evaluation article score, a legality article score, a viability article score, and a stability article score. To arrive at an overall group character score for evaluation, legality, viability, and stability, the article scores for these individual indicators were averaged within each group.

A group's character score was computed as the evaluation mean + the legality mean + the viability mean + the stability mean.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

High bivariate correlations among the four scales (see Table 6) suggest that multicollinearity may be a problem.[5]

Lewis-Beck (1980) says that a certain amount of multicollinearity is almost always present among the independent variables used in nonexperimental social science research. The result is that partial regression coefficients may become unreliable, varying considerably from sample to sample and causing partial regression coefficients to sometimes erroneously appear statistically insignificant. Farrar and Glauber (1967) consider multicollinearity to be a sample rather than a population characteristic.

The first step when multicollinearity is suspected, says Lewis-Beck (1980), should be to investigate the degree of multicollinearity present. One way is to look for bivariate correlation coefficients of .8 or higher. Another is to regress each independent variable on all of the other independent variables. When the R^2 from these equations nears 1.0, there is high multicollinearity.

Table 6 shows that all but one of the bivariate correlation coefficients exceed .8, suggesting that multicollinearity is present. This suspicion is confirmed by Table 7, which shows the results of regressing each of the four independent variables against the other three. In all cases, the R^2 is near 1.0.

Once a researcher decides that his independent variables are highly multicollinear, there are several options he can take. Often the least practical is adding new data which will supposedly provide additional bits of information for the prediction equation to work with. Another similar approach is to reduce the number of variables in the model, throwing out those multicollinear variables which are the least essential (Farrar and Glauber, 1967; Lewis-Beck, 1980).

If these methods are not possible, either because new data cannot be collected or because all of the variables are considered theoretically important, then Lewis-Beck (1980) suggests that the highly intercorrelated variables can be combined into a single indicator.[6]

Cohen and Cohen (1975) suggest a fourth method for using highly intercorrelated variables. They note that regression equations with highly intercorrelated variables yield reduced partial coefficients. "Since the IVs involved lay claim to largely the same portion of the Y variance, by definition, they can not make much by way of unique contributions." If multicollinearity is ignored in simultaneous regression coefficients, their interpretation will be misleading. Cohen and Cohen therefore recommend the hierarchical rather than the simultaneous regression model. The validity of the interpretation depends on the validity of the variable order imposed, but Cohen and Cohen prefer this theoretical constraint "to the complete anarchy of the simultaneous

analysis in which everything is partialled from everything else indiscriminately." To aid in interpretation, they suggest examining the partial correlations in the hierarchical model, often called the "net" correlations, since they represent the correlation remaining after the effect of the variable(s) has been removed from both the dependent variable and from the independent variable(s) being correlated.

This hierarchical approach seemed most appropriate for testing this study's hypothesis, which deals specifically with the amount of variance the additional independent variables can account for after the variance accounted for by the ideology scale is removed.

The folded ideological scale was entered into the regression equation first, then the other three scales were entered as a set. Table 8 shows the results of the regression tests. In no case did the variables entered into the equation in step 2 bring enough unique contribution to the equation to reach statistical significance. The partial correlations were reduced substantially in nearly every case, showing that the net relationship of these other deviance measures (once the shared relationships among the independent variables are partialled out) to the dependent variable is minor.

The results do support the hypothesis, which

specified that the ideology dimension alone would be as good a predictor of the dependent variable as a multidimensional approach would be for the journalist subjects. This is hardly surprising, of course, considering the very high bivariate correlations among the independent variables, but the irony is that a successful test of the hypothesis can only be done on data which produces multicollinearity among the independent variables. If the independent variables are not highly intercorrelated, then there will be no multicollinearity problem and there will be no support for the hypothesis.

One important question is whether similar results would have been found with other samples of journalists or with samples of audience members. The hazard is that estimates tend to be unreliable between samples when the independent variables are highly intercorrelated. Finding other samples of journalists in which the multidimensional approach did add a statistically significant contribution to the regression equation would seriously cause us to question the validity of the current study's results.

Finding that these independent variables do make a significant contribution when the sample is composed of audience members would not refute the validity of these findings, however, since the second, yet untested hypothesis is that the general audience relies on more than one dimension when comparing political entities. We would

still want to see the findings replicated with different samples of audience members, however, since the danger of unreliability due to multicollinearity may still be present. If general audience members do rely on more than one dimension when comparing political entities, then these four measures of deviance should not be so highly intercorrelated when measured with a sample of audience members, and the dangers of multicollinearity would be reduced.

In addition, before too wholeheartedly accepting confirmation of the hypothesis that politically sophisticated and knowledgeable people's comparisons of political entities may be satisfactorily measured with the unidimensional left-right scale, we should consider the worthiness of the three other measures of political deviance. Although these measures seemed appropriate for comparing such vastly different political groups, it may be possible that the measures are weak or irrelevant. Other dimensions should be tested with samples of journalists before completely abandoning the search for a better model for predicting journalists' attitudes toward political entities.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study support the hypothesis that, for politically sophisticated and knowledgeable subjects, the unidimensional left-right ideological scale is as good a predictor of the dependent variable (characterization of the group as a legitimate political contender) as is a multidimensional measurement approach.

Multicollinearity

The problems associated with multicollinearity require consideration when interpreting the findings, but multicollinearity should not prevent data analysis. In addition, the problem of multicollinearity may be greatly reduced if better multidimensional measures can be found to supplement the left-right continuum, although the hypothesis tested here would predict that some substantial amount of multicollinearity will always be evident. We should also expect the intercorrelation among the dimensions to be lower among the general media audience, the members of which are presumably less politically knowledgeable and sophisticated on the average than are people who work frequently with political concepts, including political reporters and editors and others who are politically active and/or highly educated. This is not to imply, of course, that all journalists fall into the "politically knowledgeable" group, since not all journalists are interested in or are assigned to cover politics.

Economy versus precision

The advantage of knowing that a unidimensional measurement scheme is adequate for certain subgroups is primarily in the economy of measurement. Space and time constraints on the length of survey questionnaires make the ability to predict with one question instead of with four a distinct benefit. The disadvantage, of course, may be the loss of precision when the multi-dimensional approach is discarded. Comparing Tables 1 to 4 with Table 9 shows that to be the case here; the ideology scale is less reliable than any of the other three measures. When the four scales are formed into an index, the reliability of the index exceeds the reliability of the ideology scale. Whether the gain in precision is worth the loss of economy is a question that may be answered differently in different research programs operating under different constraints.

Implications for future research

In their study of the effects of television and newspaper news exposure on the holding and structure of political attitudes, Reese and Miller (1981) found that, for people who are highly exposed to newspaper news, there was a positive relationship between the consistency of political attitudes and the extent to which the left-right scale was useful to describe the individual's political perspective. Reese and Miller suggest

> that the more a person thinks in ideological terms, the better the ability to "translate" information found in newspapers into consistent political attitudes. For the person without such an evaluation mechanism, the mass of information found in newspapers leads to a jumble of (ideologically) unrelated attitudes.

The implied, and as yet untested hypothesis is that the unidimensional approach may be inadequate for many subjects and that a multidimensional approach will be necessary when testing samples made up of general audience members.

If true, this presents some interesting questions for communication researchers. Do journalists use the left-right scale to array political entities on in their articles to the exclusion of other dimensions? Do the media provide audience members with the kinds of information the readers need to array political entities on whatever dimensions which are salient to to them? Should research studying both journalist comparisons of political entities and audience comparisons of political entities use the multidimensional measurement with both subject groups?

This suggests a new perspective for studying the media's power to affect the audience's political cognitions, attitudes, and behaviors. If the media content is ideologically oriented, then it may be irrelevant to the audience's cognitive set of political dimensions. The result, as Reese and Miller (1981) point out, could be a "jumble of (ideologically) unrelated attitudes" and a finding of only limited media effects on political attitudes.

The political framework that the audience needs to understand political messages may be missing from the often telegraphic news stories. Journalists may rely on the left-right ideological continuum to provide a framework for their political reports because the left-right scale is both meaningful to them and economical--they can use a label like "liberal" to convey what they believe to be an adequate amount of information about the group's position within the political system. Yet the reader who is less familiar with politics than the journalist may not get the message. The left-right scale may fail to provide the necessary information to the reader, the result being a failure in communication.

Table 1. Percentages of editor responses in each category of the folded ideology scale and standardized item alpha reliability coefficient.

Group	DISTANCE FROM CENTER OF IDEOLOGICAL SPECTRUM Percentage of editors replying: Center (moderate)	Liberal/ conser- vative	Very lib- eral/cons- ervative	Radical left or right	
League of Women Voters	61%	35%	4%		100%
Sierra Club	18	68	14		100%
Common Cause	21	61	14	4	100%
NAACP	11	54	35		100%
NOW	4	47	47	2	100%
NRA		18	63	19	100%
Moral Majority		9	67	24	100%
Jewish Defense League	2	23	28	47	100%
Communists		3	16	81	100%
Ku Klux Klan			4	96	100%
Nazis			2	98	100%

Reliability (standardized item alpha) = .59

Table 2. Percentages of editor responses in each category of the similarity scale and standardized item alpha reliability coefficient.

	SIMILARITY OF GROUP TO MOST AMERICANS Percentage of editors replying:				
Group	Very similar	Somewhat similar	Somewhat dissimilar	Very dissimilar	
League of Women Voters	25%	70%	5%		100%
Sierra Club	3	51	44	2	100%
Common Cause	5	68	25	2	100%
NAACP	2	47	46	5	100%
NOW		42	46	12	100%
NRA	2	29	57	12	100%
Moral Majority		25	63	12	100%
Jewish Defense League		6	36	58	100%
Communists			4	96	100%
Ku Klux Klan			9	91	100%
Nazis				100	100%

Reliability (standardized item alpha) = .76

Table 3. Percentages of editor responses in each category of the change scale and standardized item alpha reliability coefficient.

	AMOUNT OF CHANGE ADVOCATED Percentage of editors replying:				
Group	No change	Some changes	Quite a few changes	Extreme changes	
League of Women Voters	14%	77%	9%		100%
Sierra Club		49	51		100%
Common Cause		42	56	2	100%
NAACP		21	75	4	100%
NOW		11	75	14	100%
NRA	30	32	27	11	100%
Moral Majority	2	9	63	26	100%
Jewish Defense League		18	40	42	100%
Communists			2	98	100%
Ku Klux Klan		2	3	95	100%
Nazis		2	2	96	100%

Reliability (standardized item alpha) = .74

Table 4. Percentages of editor responses in each category of the close scale and standardized item alpha reliability coefficient.

Group	HOW CLOSE RESPONDENT FEELS TO THE GROUP Percentage of editors replying: Very close	Quite close	Somewhat close	Not at all close	
League of Women Voters	9%	39%	48%	4	100%
Sierra Club	13	32	50	5	100%
Common Cause	11	28	50	11	100%
NAACP	2	30	59	9	100%
NOW	11	25	39	25	100%
NRA		4	14	82	100%
Moral Majority		2	14	84	100%
Jewish Defense League		2	25	73	100%
Communists			5	95	100%
Ku Klux Klan				100	100%
Nazis				100	100%

Reliability (standardized item alpha) = .63

Table 5. Self-report of editors' political interest, activities, and experience.

	Mean	Standard Deviation
Years of journalism experience	22.6	9.85
Frequency with which they discuss politics with family and friends (1=never to 5=very often)	3.9	.93
Frequency with which they discuss politics with their coworkers (1=never to 5=very often)	4.1	.95
Extent to which editors are interested in politics (1=not at all to 5=very)	4.3	.94
Editors level of political activity (1=not at all active to 5=very active)	1.6	1.18
How much editors think their political attitudes affect their work (1=not at all to 5=a whole lot)	1.8	1.09

Table 6. Correlation coefficients among independent variable scales.

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS	Ideology	Similar	Change	Close
Ideology	--	.97	.87	.95
Similar		--	.92	.87
Change			--	.71
Close				--

Table 7. Multicollinearity check for the four independent variables. Each variable was regressed against the other three. Multicollinearity is high if R^2 approaches 1.00.

Y	X_1, X_2, X_3	R^2
ideology	similar	.92
	close	.98
	change	.99
similar	ideology	.92
	change	.95
	close	.95
change	ideology	.76
	close	.91
	similar	.92
close	ideology	.95
	change	.98
	similar	.98

Table 8. Hierarchical regression analyses of the individual indicators of "characterization as legitimate" and of the "character" index on the four measures of political deviance. N=11.

Step	Variables entered	F to enter	Simple r	Partial r	R^2	R^2 change
DEPENDENT VARIABLE = CHARACTER INDEX*						
1	ideology	21.022[d]	-.84		.70[d]	
2	change	.010	-.77	-.30		
	similar	.449	-.85	-.16		
	close	.052	-.77	.10	.73[a]	.03
DEPENDENT VARIABLE = EVALUATION						
1	ideology	17.514[c]	-.81		.66[c]	
2	change	.003	-.69	-.06		
	similar	.107	-.79	.05		
	close	.048	-.78	-.08	.67	.01
DEPENDENT VARIABLE = LEGALITY						
1	ideology	36.299[d]	-.90		.80[d]	
2	change	.091	-.84	-.47		
	similar	1.120	-.92	-.29		
	close	.214	-.82	.16	.85[a]	.05
DEPENDENT VARIABLE = VIABILITY						
1	ideology	13.751[c]	-.78		.60[c]	
2	change	.830	-.86	-.57[a]		
	similar	.808	-.85	-.58[a]		
	close	.121	-.65	.42	.77[b]	.17
DEPENDENT VARIABLE = STABILITY						
1	ideology	3.426[a]	-.53		.28[a]	
2	change	.159	-.39	.02		
	similar	.065	-.50	.17		
	close	.003	-.53	-.11	.31	.03

[a] $p < .1$ [c] $p < .01$

[b] $p < .05$ [d] $p < .001$

* Character = evaluation + legality + viability + stability

Table 9. Percentages of editor responses in each category of the deviance index (deviance = ideology + change + similar + close) and standardized item alpha reliability coefficient.

	EDITOR RATING OF GROUP DEVIANCE Percentage of editors in each category:				
Group	Not at all deviant	A little deviant	Quite deviant	Extremely deviant	
League of Women Voters	27%	55%	17%	1	100%
Sierra Club	9	50	40	1	100%
Common Cause	9	50	36	5	100%
NAACP	4	38	54	4	100%
NOW	4	31	52	13	100%
NRA	8	21	40	31	100%
Moral Majority	1	11	52	36	100%
Jewish Defense League	1	12	32	55	100%
Communists		1	7	92	100%
Ku Klux Klan		1	4	95	100%
Nazis		1	1	98	100%

Reliability (standardized item alpha) = .70

NOTES

[1]The original study also used message prominence as a dependent variable, with character and prominence added to produce an overall media treatment variable. The prominence variables were largely unrelated to group deviance, so these measures have been dropped from the secondary analysis.

[2]It soon became obvious that the vast majority of the articles in the sampling frame were from the New York Times. Investigation revealed that, while the New York Times Info Bank includes all articles in the New York Times, it only indexes articles in the other newspapers which did not already appear in the Times. The result is that the content analysis is representative of the New York Times and of non-Times articles which appeared in the other newspapers, but there is no way to know how representative the Times version is of the articles which it and the other newspapers published in common. Space constraints and local editing may have changed the articles so that the versions in the Times were different from those in the other newspapers.

[3]Pamela J. Shoemaker, "The perceived legitimacy of deviant political groups: Two experiments on media effects," Communication Research, vol. 9:2, April 1982, pp. 249-286.

[4]The assertions were coded using Osgood's (1959) complicated two-step method of coding verbal connectors and common meaning material. Evaluation codes consisted only of common meaning material, since evaluation was taken to be indicated best by the nouns and adjectives that described the group, a group member, or a possession of the group, e.g., "splinter group," "a very nice fellow," or "the group's plot." Legality, viability, and stability assertions consisted of both verbal connectors and common meaning material. An assertion's score was the product of these two ratings.

Three coders rated every assertion. The three scores were averaged to arrive at a mean assertion score that was more precise than any single coder's rating. Intercoder reliability (for coding existing assertions) of the dependent content analysis measures was .83 overall, even after being corrected for agreement due to chance. This was considered satisfactorily high, considering the complicated coding structure. See Holsti (1969) for a complete discussion of the reliability formulas used, including Scott's pi.

[5]Multicollinearity is an interdependency among the independent variables which exists apart from any dependency between the independent and dependent variables (Farrar and Glauber, 1967). Willan and Watts (1978) define multicollinearity as the existence of "one or more linear relationships between the . . . predictor variables."

The hazards of using highly collinear variables are fairly well known, the most severe of which being the inability of computer programs to invert the X matrix in regression analyses where perfect multicollinearity exists (Draper and Smith, 1981). The result is that the statistical program stops and no analysis is possible.

The consequences of less extreme multicollinearity are less severe in the sense that they do not prevent the inversion of the X matrix, but they are potentially more severe in the sense that the computer will complete its program, and the researcher is presented with results which may be misleading.

Multicollinearity may produce inflated variances and covariances, inflated correlations, and inflated prediction variance (Willan and Watts, 1978). As Farrar and Glauber (1967) put it, "Multicollinearity constitutes a threat--and often a very serious threat--both to the proper specification and the effective estimation of the type of structural relationship commonly sought through the use of regression techniques."

[6]This was the approach taken when the primary analysis was performed on this data. The four deviant measures were added into a deviance index, and all regression analyses were performed using the deviance index.

REFERENCES

BROWN, STEVEN R., and RICHARD W. TAYLOR (1973) "Frames of reference and the observation of behavior," Social Science Quarterly, 54:29-40.

COHEN, JACOB, and PATRICIA COHEN (1975) Applied Multiple Regression/Correlation Analysis for the Behavioral Sciences. Hillsdale NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

COVEYOU, MICHAEL R., and JAMES PIERESON (1977) "Ideological perceptions and political judgement: Some problems of concept and measurement," Political Methodology, 4:77-102.

DOWNS, ANTHONY (1957) An Economic Theory of Democracy. New York: Harper and Brothers, pp. 114-141.

DRAPER, NORMAN, and HARRY SMITH (1981) Applied Regression Analysis. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

FARRAR, DONALD E., and ROBERT R. GLAUBER (1967) "Multicollinearity in regression analysis: The program revisited," Review of Economics and Statistics, 49, pp. 92-107.

GANS, HERBERT J. (1979) Deciding What's News: A Study of CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, Newsweek, and Time. New York: Pantheon Books.

HOLSTI, OLE R. (1969) Content Analysis for the Social Sciences and Humanities. Reading MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing.

HOTELLING, HAROLD (1929) "Stability in competition," Economic Journal, 39:41-57.

KORNBERG, ALLAN, WILLIAM MISHLER, and JOEL SMITH (1975) "Political elite and mass perceptions of party locations in issue space: Some tests of two positions," British Journal of Political Science, 5:161-185.

LEVITIN, TERESA E., and WARREN E. MILLER (1973) "Ideological interpretations of presidential elections," American Political Science Review, 73:751-771.

LEWIS-BECK, MICHAEL S. (1980) Applied Regression. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.

OSGOOD, CHARLES E. (1959) "The representional model and relevant research methods," Trends in Content Analysis. Ithiel de Sola Pool (ed.) Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

REESE, STEPHEN D. and M. MARK MILLER (1981) "Political attitude holding and structure: The effects of newspaper and television news," Communication Research, 8:2, April, pp 167-188.

STOKES, DONALD E. (1963) "Spatial models of party competition," American Political Science Review, 338-377.

WEISBERG, HERBERT F., and JERROLD G. RUSK (1970) "Dimensions of candidate evaluation," American Political Science Review, 64:1167-1185.

WILLAN, ANDREW R., and DONALD G. WATTS (1978) "Meaningful multicollinearity measures," Technometrics, 20:4, pp. 407-412.